



WINCHENDON

Worcester County



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NARRATIVE

Narrative

The Town of Winchendon is an industrial and residential highland community on the upper Millers River. The town is in northern Worcester County on the border of New Hampshire. It was a six-mile square grant allocated in 1735 to 60 veterans and descendants of veterans of the Colonial army's expedition to Canada. The first permanent settlement in town was not until 1752, colonization was slowed by frontier warfare. Originally Winchendon was heavily agricultural but in the early 19th century there was industrial development along the Millers River. Textile manufacturing with spinning machinery was set up in 1816 on the river and the town became so large a producer of shingles that it inherited the nickname of "shingletown". Cotton and wool fabric was manufactured and significant amounts of woodworking were done. The railroad from Ashburnham to Keene, New Hampshire went through Winchendon, providing easy transportation of goods and bringing in immigrants, primarily from Ireland, to work the mill jobs. A family library was begun in town in 1835, a scientific library was started in 1851, and an agricultural library was established in 1865. The entire group of libraries was turned over to the community in 1867. The early decades of the 19th century showed tremendous growth in the town, accelerated by the railroad connections and the development and production of a continuing stream of innovative machinery to cut and shape wood, such as the cylinder saw. By 1875, almost a half million dollars of clothespins, tubs, pails, chairs and barrels was being produced in Winchendon, which had also become a center for the production of woodworking machinery. The creation of the rotary-head cylinder planer, which contributed to the advancement of all woodworking processes, is one of the proud achievements, which took place in Winchendon. In 1852, a flood washed away every bridge and dam on the Millers, River in Winchendon, destroying businesses of all kinds, but by 1855 the town had recovered sufficiently so that 1.6 million yards of cotton sheeting was produced in its mills. Agricultural production included mixed grains, hay and cattle raising. French Canadians joined the Irish immigrants moving into town to take mill jobs and help the B.D. Whitney Machine Company to become a pioneer in the field of direct motor-driven woodworking machinery. In 1911, the firm built the first single planer operated by direct motor drive. Other industries in town in the early 20th century included tanneries, the textile firms and a substantial dairying industry (Seal supplied by community. Narrative based on information provided by the Massachusetts Historical Commission)



GEOGRAPHY

Location

North central Massachusetts, bordered by Royalston on the west; Fitzwilliam and

Rindge, New Hampshire, on the north; Ashburnham on the east; and Gardner and Templeton on the south. Winchendon is 16 miles west of Fitchburg, 40 miles east of Greenfield, 63 miles northwest of Boston, and 199 miles from New York City.

Total Area: 44.07 sq. miles

Land Area: 43.29 sq. miles

Population: 8,805

Density: 203 per sq. mile

Climate

(National Climatic Data Center)

(Tully Lake Station)

Normal temperature in January.....18.8°F
Normal temperature in July.....69.3°F
Normal annual precipitation.....43.1"

U.S.G.S. Topographical Plates

Winchendon, Ashburnham, Templeton

Regional Planning Agency

Montachusett

Metropolitan Statistical Area

(1993 Definition)

Fitchburg-Leominster



GOVERNMENT

Municipal Offices

Main Number: (978) 297-2766

[Telephone Numbers for Public Information](#)

Form of Government

Board of Selectmen

Town Manager

Open Town Meeting

Year Incorporated

As a town: 1764

Registered Voters (Secretary of State 1994)

	Number	%	
Total Registered	4,266		
Democrats	998	23.4	%
Republicans	489	11.5	%
Other parties	0	0.0	%
Unenrolled Voters	2,779	65.1	%

[Senators and Representatives by City and Town](#)



DEMOGRAPHICS

Table DP-1. Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000

Geographic Area: Winchendon town, Worcester County, Massachusetts

[For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see text]

Subject	Number	Percent	Subject	Number	Percent
Total population.....	9,611	100.0	HISPANIC OR LATINO AND RACE		
SEX AND AGE			Total population.....	9,611	100.0
Male.....	4,766	49.6	Hispanic or Latino (of any race).....	195	2.0
Female.....	4,845	50.4	Mexican.....	9	0.1
Under 5 years.....	690	7.2	Puerto Rican.....	107	1.1
5 to 9 years.....	803	8.4	Cuban.....	4	-
10 to 14 years.....	903	9.4	Other Hispanic or Latino.....	75	0.8
15 to 19 years.....	755	7.9	Not Hispanic or Latino.....	9,416	98.0
20 to 24 years.....	391	4.1	White alone.....	9,135	95.0
25 to 34 years.....	1,264	13.2	RELATIONSHIP		
35 to 44 years.....	1,809	18.8	Total population.....	9,611	100.0
45 to 54 years.....	1,215	12.6	In households.....	9,482	98.7
55 to 59 years.....	429	4.5	Householder.....	3,447	35.9
60 to 64 years.....	345	3.6	Spouse.....	1,939	20.2
65 to 74 years.....	539	5.6	Child.....	3,220	33.5
75 to 84 years.....	356	3.7	Own child under 18 years.....	2,625	27.3
85 years and over.....	112	1.2	Other relatives.....	372	3.9
Median age (years).....	35.0	(X)	Under 18 years.....	169	1.8
18 years and over.....	6,704	69.8	Nonrelatives.....	504	5.2
Male.....	3,265	34.0	Unmarried partner.....	265	2.8
Female.....	3,439	35.8	In group quarters.....	129	1.3
21 years and over.....	6,361	66.2	Institutionalized population.....	37	0.4
62 years and over.....	1,206	12.5	Noninstitutionalized population.....	92	1.0
65 years and over.....	1,007	10.5	HOUSEHOLD BY TYPE		
Male.....	411	4.3	Total households.....	3,447	100.0
Female.....	596	6.2	Family households (families).....	2,477	71.9
RACE			With own children under 18 years.....	1,357	39.4
One race.....	9,487	98.7	Married-couple family.....	1,939	56.3
White.....	9,223	96.0	With own children under 18 years.....	995	28.9
Black or African American.....	77	0.8	Female householder, no husband present.....	386	11.2
American Indian and Alaska Native.....	29	0.3	With own children under 18 years.....	264	7.7
Asian.....	60	0.6	Nonfamily households.....	970	28.1
Asian Indian.....	5	0.1	Householder living alone.....	767	22.3
Chinese.....	2	-	Householder 65 years and over.....	337	9.8
Filipino.....	10	0.1	Households with individuals under 18 years.....	1,459	42.3
Japanese.....	1	-	Households with individuals 65 years and over.....	738	21.4
Korean.....	8	0.1	Average household size.....	2.75	(X)
Vietnamese.....	6	0.1	Average family size.....	3.23	(X)
Other Asian ¹	28	0.3	HOUSING OCCUPANCY		
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander.....	7	0.1	Total housing units.....	3,660	100.0
Native Hawaiian.....	4	-	Occupied housing units.....	3,447	94.2
Guamanian or Chamorro.....	3	-	Vacant housing units.....	213	5.8
Samoa.....	-	-	For seasonal, recreational, or		
Other Pacific Islander ²	-	-	occasional use.....	97	2.7
Some other race.....	91	0.9	Homeowner vacancy rate (percent).....	1.1	(X)
Two or more races.....	124	1.3	Rental vacancy rate (percent).....	3.7	(X)
Race alone or in combination with one			HOUSING TENURE		
or more other races: ³			Occupied housing units.....	3,447	100.0
White.....	9,332	97.1	Owner-occupied housing units.....	2,492	72.3
Black or African American.....	103	1.1	Renter-occupied housing units.....	955	27.7
American Indian and Alaska Native.....	86	0.9	Average household size of owner-occupied units.....	2.94	(X)
Asian.....	89	0.9	Average household size of renter-occupied units.....	2.27	(X)
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander.....	10	0.1			
Some other race.....	119	1.2			

- Represents zero or rounds to zero. (X) Not applicable.

¹ Other Asian alone, or two or more Asian categories.

² Other Pacific Islander alone, or two or more Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander categories.

³ In combination with one or more of the other races listed. The six numbers may add to more than the total population and the six percentages may add to more than 100 percent because individuals may report more than one race.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.



HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Home Sales (Banker & Tradesman) -

[Town Stats - Free market Statistics](#)

Subsidized Housing Units (DHCD 1998)

[DHCD Subsidized Housing Inventory](#)

Subsidized Housing Units: The number of housing units which count toward the municipality's 10% goal for low- and moderate-income housing. It includes both subsidized affordable units and market rate units in certain eligible subsidized developments.

Public Housing Units (DHCD 1999)

Conventional State:	118
Conventional Federal:	126

Rental Assistance (DHCD 1999)

State (MRVP:	5
Federal (Section 8):	35



TRANSPORTATION

TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESS

The principal highway of northern Worcester County, where Winchendon is located, is State Route 2 which runs across northern Massachusetts. State Route 140 and Interstate 190 connect the region to Worcester. The Springfield Terminal Railway line parallels Route 2 and provides access to the network of intermodal facilities serving central and eastern Massachusetts.

Major Highways

Principal highways are State Route 140 and U.S. Route 202.

Rail

Freight rail service is available from the Springfield Terminal Railway. Contact number: (978) 663-1073.

Bus

Winchendon is a member of the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority (MRTA) but does not receive services. Vermont Transit Lines provides service from points in Vermont, and New Hampshire via Winchendon to Gardner, Fitchburg, Ft. Devens, Concord, Newton and Boston.

Other

The Fitchburg Municipal Airport, a General Aviation (GA) facility, is accessible via Route 12. It has 2 asphalt runways 4,511' and 3,502' long. Instrument approaches available: Non-precision.



CULTURE AND RECREATION

LIBRARIES

[Board of Library Commissioners On-line Library Catalog](#)

MUSEUMS

(American Association of Museums)

Winchendon Historical Society
50 Pleasant Street
(617) 297-0300

[Telephone Numbers for Public Information](#)

Recreational Facilities (Recreational sites and activities)

[Department of Environmental Management Recreation Section](#)



MISCELLANEOUS

HEALTH FACILITIES

(Dept. of Public Health 1992)

Hospitals

None

Long Term Care

Open Arms Nursing Home

Hospices

None

Rest Homes

Pleasant View Rest Home

UTILITIES

[Telephone Numbers for Public Utilities](#)

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NOTE: The COMMUNITY PROFILE draws information from a diversity of sources. The main source of information is listed under each section. In some instances comments submitted by the municipality were incorporated to correct and/or enhance the information obtained from the main source. However, no changes were made to those data bases which must be consistent throughout the state. DHCD has made efforts to ensure the accuracy of all data in the COMMUNITY PROFILES, but cannot take responsibility for any consequences arising from the use of the information contained in this document.